

years—in 10 years. That will be the first increase in the minimum wage. It will be increased to \$5.85 an hour, followed by an additional 70 cents one year later, and an additional 70 cents one year after that.

This will mean new hope and opportunity for 13 million men and women. Primarily women, because almost 60 percent of minimum wage workers are women. It will benefit some 6.4 million children because more than half of the women who will benefit from the increase have children. So it will benefit the children. This means hope is on the way.

It has been a long time, Mr. President. We have heard those who say: Well, the increase in the minimum wage is going to cost jobs, and it will work a hardship on these people. Of course, that is what they have said on every increase there has been. This is the 10th increase in the minimum wage, and they have been wrong each and every time. Currently, the second largest economy in Western Europe is Great Britain—they are paying \$10.97 as a minimum wage. They have lifted almost a million children out of poverty. At the present time, Ireland also has one of the strongest economies in Western Europe and their minimum wage is \$11.25 an hour, and they have the strongest economy in all of Western Europe. They have reduced child poverty by 40 percent, and their economy is strong. So \$5.85 in this great country at this time is just a statement that many of us believe that work should pay, and that people who work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, should not live in poverty.

So tomorrow will be an important day, Mr. President, and it is appropriate that the Senate be reminded of it.

#### VOTE-ARAMAS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, last Thursday night, in an embarrassing display, the Senate engaged in the perennial and painfully ridiculous budget vote-arama.

This is the process where the Senate considers either a budget resolution or reconciliation bill, and, under the rules of the Budget Act, Senators are permitted to offer and secure votes on amendments after the statutory limitation on debate has expired. By consent, Senators are usually allocated 2 minutes to describe their positions for and against an amendment before the Senate votes. Because Senators are not required to file their amendments in advance, far too often, Senators cannot read an amendment before a rollcall vote begins. We cannot even get an inkling of some of the mischief contained in many of these amendments. Many times, the amendments being considered would require sweeping changes to current law, and Senators are forced to cast their votes on these complex matters without the benefit of debate, an understanding of the costs, or even the

chance to peek at the text of the amendment.

In recent years, the budget vote-arama has come to signify an absolute breakdown in the deliberations of the U.S. Senate. The vote-arama is a degrading process that sullies the reputation of the Senate every time it occurs. I can only imagine, and I cringe at the thought of, how the Senate must appear to the American people, voting on matters without debate, and without even something as simple as a copy of the amendment.

Last Thursday night, during the debate on the Higher Education Access Act, the so-called education reconciliation bill, the process deteriorated even further, into something appalling. The Senate fell into a political tit-for-tat, with Senators offering, at first, an unrelated amendment regarding the Federal Communications Commission, and then a sense-of-the-Senate resolution regarding the detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and then an unrelated amendment to alter the collective bargaining rights of American workers. The free-for-all further deteriorated when an amendment was offered urging the President not to pardon the Vice President's former Chief of Staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and then a retaliatory amendment was offered regarding the pardons granted by President Clinton. And on it went.

Amendment after amendment was offered, each completely unrelated to the education bill before the Senate, and subject to multiple violations under the Budget Act. And, yet, each side continued to raise the stakes, taking political shots at the opposing side, while the Senate suffered through a humiliating night of political ping-pong. Cooler heads finally prevailed, thanks to the intervention of the majority leader, and, at least, the amendments regarding Presidential pardons were withdrawn. Nevertheless, the soap opera of last Thursday night underscores the dangers of the budget reconciliation process—where bills are considered under expedited procedures, where debate is almost nonexistent, where vote-aramas occur, and where Senators are called upon to cast votes on nearly anonymous amendments that amount to little more than colorful sloganeering.

The spectacle also underscored the absolute necessity of the Byrd Rule. Section 313 of the Budget Act—the Byrd Rule—prevents extraneous matter from being added to reconciliation bills, and being jammed through the Senate on party-line votes, like the ones we saw last Thursday night. The Byrd Rule was designed to prevent passage of exactly the kind of amendments that were being offered.

As the hours ticked by, I believe that many Members were embarrassed by the performance of the Senate, as it got dragged into a political game of tossing zingers. In hindsight, we have to admit that matters got carried away, and that this body drifted far

from its constitutional responsibility to legislate for the American people, and not the political media. Last Thursday night, the Senate displayed an utter lack of seriousness and appreciation for the depth and complexity of the issues before this country. I opposed every amendment that violated the Byrd Rule—regardless of whether it was offered by a Republican or Democrat, and regardless of how I viewed the subject matter—because I was so appalled by the deterioration in the Senate's deliberative processes. I can say honestly that I took no part in the message-mongering amendments that were extraneous to the underlying bill, and that showed this institution in such a shameful light.

Last Thursday night's spectacle ought to cause every Senator to re-evaluate the budget process in the U.S. Senate. I will renew my efforts to do away with these pernicious vote-aramas, and I hope my colleagues will join me in that effort.

#### REFUGEE CRISIS IN IRAQ ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, yesterday's Washington Post included details from a memo by our Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, in which he makes a strong case that we need to do more to make it possible for Iraqis employed by our government to come to the United States.

Ambassador Crocker emphasizes the growing danger facing these Iraqis, who as he states "work under extremely difficult conditions, and are targets for violence including murder and kidnapping." According to the article, Ambassador Crocker has called for establishment of an immigrant visa program for these Iraqi employees.

In fact, Senators SMITH, BIDEN, HAGEL, LIEBERMAN, LEAHY, LEVIN, and I have introduced legislation which establishes a program to do precisely what Ambassador Crocker calls for.

Our legislation establishes an immigrant visa program for Iraqis who have worked for or directly with the United States government for at least 1 year. Our Government now provides such special immigrant visas but only for Iraqi and Afghan translators and interpreters. Our bill expands it to include Iraqis in other professions who have been employed by us or who have worked directly with us.

In addition, our legislation creates additional options for Iraqis who are under threat because of their close association with the United States to apply to our refugee resettlement program.

The Senate is obviously divided on the best overall policy to pursue on the war. I thought it was a mistake from the beginning. That is no secret. Some of our colleagues are convinced that continuing the use of military force in Iraq is necessary to protect our national security.

But our divisions on that issue should not obscure the fact that all of

us on both sides of the aisle agree that America owes an immense debt of gratitude to these Iraqis, and we have a special responsibility to help them. They have supported our effort, saved American lives, and are clearly at great risk because of it.

David Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union, recognized this obligation and called for action in a June 12 article in "The Hill." He recalled a Vietnamese friend who did not make it out of Vietnam when the U.S. left, and said, "There are in Iraq today untold numbers of people like my Vietnamese friend who rushed to our aid when we arrived and have worked with us since. If we abandon them, they may not be so lucky."

Similarly, in a June 24 op-ed in the Washington Post, Julia Taft called for swift action to assist Iraqis whose lives are in danger because of their work with our government. Ms. Taft served as director of the Interagency Task Force for Indochinese Refugee Resettlement in the Ford Administration and was later Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration. She wrote about an Iraqi couple working for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad who had been kidnapped and executed.

She said:

They are among the most recent of thousands of cases in which Iraqis affiliated with the United States have been forced into hiding, tortured or, often, killed . . . I found myself thinking of this husband and wife last week . . . and struggling with a terrible contradiction. The United States is the world's most generous contributor to refugee relief, and we have always taken the lead on resettling refugees. Yet our country has done the bare minimum to help these Iraqis facing death and exile.

In her call for action, Taft said, "The administration and Congress cannot waste any more time. Their lack of political will has cost too many people their lives. . . ."

In a July 19 op-ed in USA Today, Michael Medved, a conservative Republican who supports the ongoing war effort, and Lanny J. Davis, a liberal Democrat who supports the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, called for swift and bold action to help Iraqi refugees.

They wrote:

One issue should bring together all factions of the ongoing debate, and that is America's moral obligation to open our doors—immediately—to Iraqis who face danger and death because of their assistance to our forces.

They specifically called for action on our legislation, saying:

Last month, a bipartisan group of senators, including Kennedy, who is anti-war, and Lieberman, who supports the war, introduced legislation that would provide special refugee status for Iraqis who are in danger because of their association with the United States or its contractors. This legislation, or something like it, needs strong support from the administration as well as from citizens across ideological and partisan lines. . . . days, even hours, could mean the difference between life and death for people who did nothing wrong other than help Americans.

Many Iraqis have been working with our Armed Forces, our diplomatic mission, and our reconstruction teams in Iraq and have performed valiantly, and their lives are at risk. Many have lost their lives and many more have lost their homes, their property, and their livelihood. For some, it will be too dangerous to ever return home.

America has a special obligation to keep faith with the Iraqis who now have a bulls-eye on their back because of their association with our Government.

Our bipartisan legislation will establish the kind of process that Ambassador Crocker, David Keene, Julia Taft, Roy Medved, Lanny Davis, and many others have called for to help these Iraqis who have sacrificed so much for the United States. I ask unanimous consent that the Washington Post article and other articles I have mentioned be printed in the RECORD.

I urge my colleagues to support our legislation, S. 1651, to keep the faith with the many brave Iraqis whose lives are in great danger because they have the courage to work with the United States.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, July 22, 2007]

ENVOY URGES VISAS FOR IRAQIS AIDING U.S.

(By Spencer S. Hsu)

The American ambassador in Baghdad, Ryan C. Crocker, has asked the Bush administration to take the unusual step of granting immigrant visas to all Iraqis employed by the U.S. government in Iraq because of growing concern that they will quit and flee the country if they cannot be assured eventual safe passage to the United States.

Crocker's request comes as the administration is struggling to respond to the flood of Iraqis who have sought refuge in neighboring countries since sectarian fighting escalated early last year. The United States has admitted 133 Iraqi refugees since October, despite predicting that it would process 7,000 by the end of September. "Our [Iraqi staff members] work under extremely difficult conditions, and are targets for violence including murder and kidnapping," Crocker wrote Undersecretary of State Henrietta H. Fore. "Unless they know that there is some hope of an [immigrant visa] in the future, many will continue to seek asylum, leaving our Mission lacking in one of our most valuable assets."

Crocker's two-page cable dramatizes how Iraq's instability and a rapidly increasing refugee population are stoking new pressures to help those who are threatened or displaced. As public sentiment grows for a partial or full American withdrawal, U.S. Embassy officials are facing demands from their own employees to secure a reliable exit route, and the administration as a whole is facing pressure from aid groups, lawmakers and diplomats to do more for those upended by the war.

With Iraqi immigration to the United States stuck at a trickle, however, it appears that humanitarian concerns have been trumped so far by fears that terrorists may infiltrate through refugee channels. Bureaucratic delays at the departments of State and Homeland Security have also bogged down the processing of immigration requests by Iraqis fleeing violence.

Skeptics contend another reason the administration has been slow to resettle Iraqis

in large numbers is that doing so could be seen as admitting that its efforts to secure Iraq have failed. The intense pressure for visas "reflects the fact that the situation is pretty dire," said Roberta Cohen, principal adviser to the U.N. secretary general's representative on internally displaced persons.

The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees says that about 2 million Iraqis have been displaced inside the country so far, and that an estimated 2.2 million others have fled to Syria, Jordan and other neighbors, where they threaten to overwhelm schools and housing, destabilize host governments and provide a recruiting ground for radical unrest. Each month, an additional 60,000 Iraqis flee their homes, the U.N. agency said.

Overall estimates of the number of Iraqis who may be targeted as collaborators because of their work for U.S., coalition or foreign reconstruction groups are as high as 110,000. The U.N. refugee agency has estimated that 20,000 Iraqi refugees need permanent resettlement.

In the cable he sent July 9, Crocker highlighted the plight of Iraqis who have assumed great risk by helping the United States. Since June 2004, at least nine U.S. Embassy employees have been killed—including a married couple last month. But Iraqi employees other than interpreters and translators generally cannot obtain U.S. immigrant visas, and until a recent expansion that took the annual quota to 500 from 50, interpreter-translator applicants faced a nine-year backlog.

As a result, Crocker said, the embassy is referring two workers per week to a U.S. asylum program. Outside analysts and former officials say the number of Iraqi staffers at the embassy has fallen by about half from 200 last year, while rough estimates place the number of Iraqi employees of the U.S. government in the low thousands.

A 43-year-old former engineer for the U.S. Embassy who gave his name as Abu Ali said Iraqis working with Americans at any level must trust no one, use fake names, conceal their travel and telephone use, and withhold their employment even from family members. Despite such extreme precautions, he said they are viewed as traitors by some countrymen and are still mistrusted by the U.S. government.

"We have no good end or finish for us," said Ali, who quit the embassy in June and moved to Dubai with his four children.

Kirk W. Johnson, who served as regional reconstruction coordinator in Fallujah in 2005 for the U.S. Agency for International Development, said the damage to the United States' standing in the Muslim world will be long-lasting if the country's immigration officials are unable to tell friend from foe in Iraq—between terrorists and those who have sacrificed the most to work and fight alongside Americans.

"If we screw this group of people, we're never going to make another friend in the Middle East as long as I'm alive," said Johnson, who is advocating the resettlement of Iraqis who have worked for coalition forces. "The people in the Middle East are watching what happens to this group."

The State Department declined to comment on Friday about Crocker's proposals or his cable, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post. But Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said last week that he would like Iraqis who worked for the United States or who have been vouched for by American authorities to be processed "as quickly as we can, because I think we have a responsibility there."

Kenneth H. Bacon, president of Refugees International, who has urged broader U.S. resettlement efforts, said that "the U.S. does

have an obligation to be fair to the people who have served it, whether in Iraq or elsewhere. That's what Ryan Crocker wants to be able to promise." Bacon was among several refugee experts who said that Iraqi employees seeking immigrant visas have already shown their trustworthiness by exposing themselves to brutal attacks over their work in the Green Zone and elsewhere.

But such Iraqis are only a small part of a broader refugee problem that Washington confronts as a result of the war. In recent months, the U.N. refugee agency has referred 8,000 Iraqi refugee applications to the U.S. government. About 1,500 of them have been interviewed, and about 1,000 "conditionally approved" pending security checks and travel arrangements, a DHS official said. The State Department expects 4,000 more interviews to be completed by October.

But State and DHS are unlikely to admit more than 2,000 Iraqi refugees by October, U.S. officials said. Since 2003, the year of the U.S. invasion, the United States has admitted 825 Iraqi refugees, many of them backlogged applicants from the time when Saddam Hussein was in power. By comparison, the United States has accepted 3,498 Iranians in the past nine months.

Smaller countries have also done more. Sweden received 9,065 Iraqi asylum applications in 2006, approving them at a rate of 80 percent, although it recently announced tighter restrictions.

By past standards, the U.S. response also has been meager. Washington admitted nearly 140,000 Vietnamese refugees in eight months in 1975, although only after the U.S. defeat in South Vietnam became clear.

A DHS official blamed the State Department for paperwork delays. Assistant Secretary of State Ellen R. Sauerbrey said officials are speeding up processing and anticipate "a significantly larger number" of admissions. "The people who are in the pipeline will be admitted by next year or, hopefully, the end of the calendar year," she said.

But DHS has opposed boosting the U.S. intake of Iraqis. In a June 26 memo to Congress, the department opposed a legislative proposal to allow applications by Christians and other Iraqi religious minorities, saying it would "vastly increase" the number of refugees. "No vetting process is perfect, and even a strong vetting process can be strained by rapid growth or high volumes," the memo stated.

U.S. officials declined to discuss details about security checks for Iraqis, but said that, under special rules, applicants are subjected to interviews, fingerprinting and examination of their family histories. The information is checked against military, FBI, State and Homeland Security databases.

But DHS rules sometimes pose problems peculiar to the Iraqi conflict: Those who pay ransom to free relatives kidnapped by insurgents, for example, are sometimes viewed as providing material support to terrorists.

Homeland Security officials say they have worked hard to adjust their policies, but Chertoff said in the interview that Washington will not compromise on screening quality. "What we can't afford to do and what would be devastating for the program would be if we were to start to allow people in who actually were a threat," he said.

Years ago, Chertoff added, Europe had more relaxed asylum standards, and it "wound up admitting a bunch of people who are now the radical extremists who are fomenting homegrown terrorism."

Congress is nonetheless stepping up pressure on the administration to do more, with Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) introducing separate legislation to expand U.S. refugee and immigrant

visa programs for Iraqis, including for those threatened because they helped coalition or reconstruction efforts.

"The Administration has ignored this crisis for far too long, and its response is inadequate," Kennedy said in a written statement. "We can't solve this problem alone, but America has an obligation to provide leadership and resettle greater numbers of Iraqis who are targeted by the assassin's bullet because they assisted us in the war."

[From the American Conservative Union, June 12, 2007]

#### RETURNING THE FAVOR (By David A. Keene)

I had a Vietnamese friend who didn't make it out when we abandoned his country more than 30 years ago. I wondered for years what happened to him amid reports of the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who had worked with and trusted us to stand by them in their fight against the communists.

One can only imagine the sense of abandonment he and his friends must have felt as they watched the last of our helicopters, with desperate and panicked Vietnamese clinging to their skids, lift off from the abandoned U.S. Embassy in Saigon. The footage of that scene remains burned into the consciousness of many of those who watched it from the comfort of their homes back then, but many more of us simply changed the channel and chose to forget what happened to those left behind.

It turned out that my friend was one of the "lucky" ones. He wasn't executed, but was sentenced to three years in one of Ho's camps, which he somehow managed to survive. Once he got out, he rounded up his family and fled, eventually making it to this country, where he lives to this day.

There are in Iraq today untold numbers of people like my Vietnamese friend who rushed to our aid when we arrived and have worked with us since. If we abandon them, they may not be so lucky.

My daughter is in the Army and recently returned from a year in and around Baghdad, where she and fellow members of her unit worked closely with an interpreter they came to know as "Timmy."

When she told me about what might await Timmy if we leave his country, I was reminded of my Vietnamese friend.

In many ways, Timmy is much like thousands of other Iraqis who threw in with us in the fight against tyranny and terrorism after our troops arrived in his country. At age 21, Saddam Hussein's goons arrested him as an enemy of the regime and sentenced him to four years in prison, where he was tortured and witnessed the deaths of thousands of his fellow prisoners.

After the arrival of U.S. forces and the fall of Saddam Hussein, he joined the New Iraqi Army's Special Forces. In the next couple of years his unit suffered heavy casualties and he won numerous medals.

By 2005, Timmy had been promoted, but after being reprimanded on several occasions by superiors who caught him saluting "infidel occupiers," he left the army and signed on as a contract interpreter, or "terp," as our troops call people like him.

Offered a choice of assignments, Timmy picked the most dangerous forward operations base in Baghdad because, as he put it, "It's where I can do the most good." That's where he met my daughter and those who served with her.

"Terps" aren't armed, but Timmy put his own life at risk on a daily basis, saved the lives of many of our people and, as a result of just one such incident, was nominated by Gen. George Casey for the secretary of defense's "Medal for Valor."

Timmy was married at the time he decided to work with us and his wife was expecting, but when her father learned what he was up to, he had her kidnapped and the marriage annulled. Timmy has never seen his child and is now so well-known in Baghdad that those who work with him say he will be killed within days if we leave.

My daughter called me before she left Baghdad to tell me she and those who served with her want Timmy out. "If we leave him," she said, "we will be sentencing him to death and we can't do that because he's one of us and we owe him our lives." Then she put Timmy on the phone, introduced us and before she hung up said, "I wanted you to say hello to him so that you'll remember that he's a person and not just a name on a piece of paper."

Sadly, we have allowed very, very few Timmies into this country. He and thousands like him have risked everything in a common struggle for which many here and in Iraq have no stomach. But we have allowed fewer than 800 of them into the U.S. since 2003.

Democratic Rep. Earl Blumenauer of Oregon and Republican Rep. Christopher Shays of Connecticut want to expand that number. H.R. 2265, which they introduced, would help us deliver on Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky's promise that "we are committed to those Iraqis who have provided assistance to the U.S. military and embassy."

It's the least we can do for Timmy and those like him who have risked everything to help us.

#### FLEEING OUR RESPONSIBILITY: THE U.S. OWES SUCCOR TO IRAQI REFUGEES

(By Julia Taft)

Last month an Iraqi couple working for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad were kidnapped and executed. Their deaths were not acknowledged by the State Department, and the media made little mention of the murders. They are among the most recent of thousands of cases in which Iraqis affiliated with the United States have been forced into hiding, tortured or, often, killed.

I found myself thinking of this husband and wife last week, as World Refugee Day passed, and struggling with a terrible contradiction. The United States is the world's most generous contributor to refugee relief, and we have always taken the lead on resettling refugees. Yet our country has done the bare minimum to help these Iraqis facing death and exile. Instead of clearing the way for their resettlement, we have blocked their path to safety with bureaucratic barriers and political hurdles.

President Bush should look to another Republican president, Gerald Ford, as an example of executive leadership in addressing refugee crises. In 1975 President Ford asked me to direct an interagency task force charged with resettling Indochinese refugees in the United States. Between May 1 and Dec. 20, 1975, we evacuated and resettled more than 131,000 Vietnamese who were at risk of persecution.

We rescued these people in the face of fierce political opposition. Initially, for example, California Gov. Jerry Brown announced that he wanted no refugees in his state. We overcame his reluctance and all other obstacles because the president had committed to doing everything possible to save the lives of the Vietnamese who had stood beside us. Ford persuaded Republicans and Democrats in Congress to appropriate emergency funds, and he visited refugees awaiting resettlement at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas. American families, churches and synagogues responded to the president's

leadership with offers to sponsor refugees in need. At staging grounds in the South Pacific, our immigration officers worked 14-hour days.

Why is there no similar sense of urgency for the 4.2 million Iraqis displaced and in danger? President Bush himself has yet to speak of the crisis. Although members of his administration claim to have made Iraqi refugees a top priority, admission numbers tell a different story. Only one Iraqi refugee made it through our process to safety in the United States in May, and only one made it the month before. The United States has committed to reviewing 7,000 cases and admitting 3,000 refugees by the end of this fiscal year, in September. That is as many as our team processed in a single day back in 1975.

What has happened to our leadership on this issue?

The administration and Congress cannot waste any more time. Their lack of political will has cost too many people their lives. A bill introduced last week by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, would begin this process by swiftly providing increased resettlement options and visas for those at risk because of their association with the United States. The president also should direct that 20,000 unallocated refugee visas from this year be used for Iraqis. Finally, we must increase aid to countries in the Middle East that combined are hosting 2 million Iraqis; this would help ensure that the refugees can stay and that the host countries remain willing to keep their doors open.

Administration officials say that the best solution to the Iraqi refugee crisis is a stable homeland to which refugees can return. No one wants that solution more than the refugees themselves, but conditions in Iraq are not heading in that direction. The humanitarian crisis must not become a pawn in political pronouncements about the state of our efforts in Iraq. This was true with respect to our rescue of Vietnamese refugees, and it is true now. No matter your view of the war, welcoming the persecuted and standing by our friends is the right thing to do.

[From the USA Today, July 19, 2007]

#### ONE IRAQI ISSUE THAT SHOULD UNITE US ALL (By Lanny J. Davis and Michael Medved)

Iraqis who have aided the U.S.-led mission are already targets. Once the American troops pull back—and they inevitably will—entire families will be left to fend for themselves. We still live with the haunting images from the Vietnam War. This country must not let history repeat itself in Iraq.

The war in Iraq has inspired bitter divisions—over whether America should have intervened, how we conducted the conflict, and how we should get out. But one issue should bring together all factions of the ongoing debate, and that is America's moral obligation to open our doors—immediately—to Iraqis who face danger and death because of their assistance to our forces.

Anna Husarska, a senior policy adviser at the International Rescue Committee, recently offered a chilling report of two Iraqis—a husband and wife team—who worked for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and were killed. As Husarska wrote, “A statement on the Internet made clear why: ‘The swords of the security personnel of the Islamic State in Iraq . . . are with God's grace slitting the throats of crusaders and their aides and lackeys.’”

Another young Iraqi was more fortunate. Several weeks ago, he lost his job as a contractor on a U.S. Army base. Security rules

forced him to leave the base immediately. Driven from the safety of an American enclave within hours, he faced the likelihood that his association with coalition forces would lead almost immediately to his murder—if not by the anti-American insurgents then by his own family, who believed he had dishonored them.

On the other side of the world, a group of U.S. lawyers working pro bono for this young man (including Lanny J. Davis, the co-author of this commentary) learned of his dilemma and interrupted a sunny spring afternoon to try to save his life. SOS calls to congressional VIPs, including staffers of Sens. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., produced a surprisingly quick response. Graham interrupted his weekend and called a senior government attorney in Iraq (late in the evening Iraq time) who had legal authority on this type of situation. A Washington lawyer close to U.S. Army senior officials reached top brass. The result: This Iraqi was placed in another job and allowed to stay on the base.

#### A CONSTANT RISK

This loyal young man continues working at the U.S. facility in Iraq, but he can't leave or he'll be killed. That is because under current immigration policies, despite his service to our country, he can't find refuge in the land of the free.

Regardless of one's views on the Iraq war, all people of goodwill must recognize that we owe a debt to those Iraqis who risked everything to assist the U.S. dream of a pro-Western democracy in the heart of the Middle East. Recently, the assistant secretary of the State Department's refugees bureau, Ellen Sauerbrey, announced spots for up to 25,000 Iraqis who can qualify for refugee status, but most of those slots remain unfilled.

According to Husarska, 11 were admitted to the USA in February, eight in March, one in April and one in May. Considering the direct peril to some of our closest associates among Iraqis, we need to improve on this pathetic record.

In 1975, we shared the revulsion of nearly all Americans at the awful scenes of Vietnamese civilians hanging on to the last U.S. helicopters, literally by their finger tips, as they took off from the rooftops of U.S. buildings in Saigon. We remember the images of women left behind, holding babies, crying hysterically, their hands reaching into the air as their American protectors abruptly departed. British historian Paul Johnson aptly observed that this moment symbolized “the most shameful defeat in the whole of American history. . . . But it was the helpless people of the region who had to pay the real price.”

In response to that shame, President Ford authorized the admission to the USA of more than 131,000 South Vietnamese refugees. So why not show comparable commitment to Iraqis who have worked closely with our troops and civilian personnel and face dire risks because of their association with the American cause?

Even if the Bush administration succeeds in its determined efforts to stabilize the current Iraqi government, an American departure could still put at risk some of the individuals most closely associated with our long-term role in the country. And even if a greatly reduced contingent of U.S. troops remains in Iraq on a semipermanent basis to battle al-Qaeda (as even the anti-war Senate Democratic resolution stipulated), those soldiers will have their hands full with other assignments without diverting attention to the protection of Iraqi families whose pro-American roles placed them at risk. These people deserve our support, regardless of our dif-

fering positions on ongoing disputes about the war and its execution.

#### OPENING OUR GATES

Last month, a bipartisan group of senators, including Kennedy, who is anti-war, and Lieberman, who supports the war, introduced legislation that would provide special refugee status for Iraqis who are in danger because of their association with the United States or its contractors. This legislation, or something like it, needs strong support from the administration as well as from citizens across ideological and partisan lines. As the experience with the young Iraqi described above proves, days, even hours, could mean the difference between life and death for people who did nothing wrong other than help Americans.

No one—not even the most fervent critics of the Iraq war—expects that an end to that struggle will bring an overall conclusion to the larger war with Islamo-Nazi terrorists. In the continued battle against jihadist fanatics, the admission to our country of Iraqi Arabs who courageously proved their support of the American cause can only enrich our resources for challenges to come. The language skills and cultural perspective of moderate Iraqis won't damage our society and could play an important role in helping to defend it.

Finally, we must consider our moral obligation here, especially for those who support an immediate or definite timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces. To deny that obligation, or worse, to ignore it, would tragically stain the legacy of another generation of Americans—whether pro- or anti-war—as did our passivity and indifference to the plight of Vietnamese allies left behind to suffer and die.

#### CHANGES TO S. CON. RES. 21

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, section 207(c) of S. Con. Res. 21, the 2008 budget resolution, permits the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to adjust the section 207(b) discretionary spending limits and allocations pursuant to section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 for legislation reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee that provides a certain level of funding for fiscal year 2008 for four program integrity initiatives. The initiatives are continuing disability reviews and supplemental security income redeterminations, Internal Revenue Service tax enforcement, health care fraud and abuse control, and unemployment insurance improper payment reviews.

The Senate Appropriations Committee reported the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, on June 27, 2007. That bill contains provisions that fulfill the conditions of section 207(c) for adjustments related to continuing disability reviews and supplemental security income redeterminations, health care fraud and abuse control, and unemployment insurance improper payment reviews.

In addition, the Senate Appropriations Committee reported the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2008, on July 13, 2007. That bill contains provisions that fulfill the conditions of section 207(c)